

Key Concepts			
Shekinah	The dwelling or divine presence of God often shown as a cloud.	Messiah	The promised deliverer of the Jewish nation. The word means ‘anointed one’
Synagogue	A building or place of meeting for worship in the Jewish faith	Covenant	A promise or an agreement. Covenants were made between God, Abraham and Moses.
Shabbat (Sabbath)	The Jewish day of rest and seventh day of the week	Mitzvot	Actions that Jews must perform or avoid. There are 613 including the Ten Commandments
Kosher	Means ‘clean’ or ‘fit’. It describes food that is okay to eat for Jewish people.	Torah	The Jewish written law and the first 5 books of the Hebrew Bible

<p><u>The Synagogue</u></p> <p>The Jewish place of worship is called the synagogue. It is also a place of meeting for Jews. Synagogues have three main functions. Firstly, they are a house of prayer. Second, a house of study. It is sometimes called shul, meaning “school”. Finally, as a social hall. The synagogue is a focus for community celebration, clubs, cultural events and charity.</p>
<p><u>Sources of Authority</u></p> <p>“Do not represent gods by any carved statue or picture of anything in the heaven above, on the earth below, or in the water below the land. Do not bow down to such gods or worship them.” Exodus</p> <p>“Thus said the Lord: Though I have removed them far away among nations, and though I have scattered them among the lands, I have made for them a small sanctuary (synagogue) in the lands where they have arrived.” Prophet Ezekiel</p>

Features of a Synagogue	One common feature of all synagogues is a lack of statues. Synagogues should face towards Jerusalem . Many of the synagogues features resemble the now destroyed Temple in Jerusalem. At the wall facing towards Jerusalem there will be a cupboard called the Ark . This is where the Torah scrolls are kept. The Ner tamid or eternal light is kept burning always in front of the Ark. It is a reminder of the eternal nature of God and is a symbol of the light that burned continually in the Temple. The bimah is a platform, usually in the middle or front of the synagogue. The Torah scrolls are removed from the Ark, placed on the bimah, and read from here. The Torah scrolls are kept in the Holy Ark and are dressed in silk or velvet covers in rich colours, and are embroidered with gold thread. The Star of David , also known as the shield of David is the symbol of Judaism. It is often found on the outside of the synagogue. This is a more modern Jewish symbol than the Menorah (seven branched candle stick).
Synagogue in Britain Today	Synagogues are first and foremost a place of worship and prayer for Jewish people. However, this is not their only use. The synagogue is the place where Jews come together for community prayer services such as the Amidah . This can only take place when there is a minyan (in Orthodox synagogues this is a group of ten or more male Jews). A synagogue is also a house of study . For Orthodox Jews, the study of sacred texts such as the Torah and Talmud is a lifelong task. A synagogue is likely to have a library of scared Jewish books for members of the community to study. Most synagogues also have a social hall for religious and non-religious activities. It can be used as a town hall where matters of importance within the community can be discussed.
Worship in the Synagogue	The main public acts of worship take place in the synagogue. Each synagogue usually has daily prayers , but the time when the community comes together is for the Shabbat service and the festival services . The Orthodox service will include important prayers such as the Shema and Amidah (known as the standing prayer). At each service, selected portions of the Torah are read and almost all the service is in Hebrew. Men and women will sit separately. Reform services are usually shorter but more formal, and more of the service is read aloud together. The Rabbi could be male or female and men and women can sit together unlike in an Orthodox synagogue. Prayers and readings usually leave out beliefs about bodily resurrection and a personal Jewish Messiah .

<p><u>Exam Practice</u></p> <p>b) Describe three features of a synagogue (5)</p>
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